



"Don't you want to rest that thing and raid the refrigerator?"

Sight & Sound

By Ernest Kreiling

HOLLYWOOD — No single quality is more essential to the success of a music-variety TV special than an easy, free-flowing spontaneity.

But probably nothing requires more painstaking and monotonous boredom than creating that spontaneity. One of TV's blithest spring spirits, The Andy Williams Show to be seen on NBC Friday evening May 4, will be the result of days of plodding and unexciting rehearsal, a few hours of which I watched recently.

Appearing with Andy Williams will be three of TV's newer and brighter personalities, Andy Griffith, Dick Van Dyke, and Ann-Margaret.

STARS THOUGH they are, the day I witnessed camera rehearsals they were little more than automatons responding mechanically to the directions of director Bub Yorkin, which were given over a blaring loud speaker.

Yorkin, whose credentials for achievement need not be listed beyond the award-winning Fred Astaire specials, slowly and repeatedly walked the stars through their numbers, going over each movement, step, and gesture as he studied their effect on the cameras. Although he had four monstrous color TV cameras at his command he seemed especially interested in the use of one.

SUCH A variety program isn't simply a stage presentation performed for the cameras to record, but rather a production designed especially for the cameras. While the stars stood, waited, drank coffee and waited some more, Yorkin concentrated his efforts on a dinosaur-like dolly with a color camera mounted at the snout. In a production number using all four stars this single boom undulated its neck swiftly from one performer to another, moved in close and then dashed back as the troupe tranced after it. I had the impression Yorkin was letting this fluid camera simulate the natural eye movement from one point of interest to another in order to obviate an awkward staginess too often seen in TV musicals.

In another scene Yorkin commanded his multi-ton monster to dash up and down the huge sound stage with the speed and agility of a gazelle.

THROUGH HOURS of this the four stars waited and waited, then carried out his precise instructions with a patient but bored good humor. This was the monotonous, tiring, and uninspiring phase of show business, and as days of this fatiguing exercise drew on, the Andy Williams Show slowly developed an appropriately casual relaxation.

If hard work and patience

are equally as important as talent and ingenuity in making for pleasant viewing, the Andy Williams hour of music, comedy, and color should be a good one.

Andy Griffith's homey advice to a troubled world and Dick Van Dyke's comedic mastery of a pantomime sequence will both delight and amuse.

BUT THE hyphenated newcomer, Ann-Margaret, might well steal the show. She sings and cavorts with a sophistication almost frightening in one so young. But years notwithstanding, she's a captivating professional.

The rewards of fame and fortune in show business may be great, but the long hard work that goes into one fleeting TV hour doesn't seem to be either glamorous or fun.

RANDOM RUMINATIONS — There is some sort of poetic justice in the fact that the Voice of Firestone, which started on radio in 1928, is now being given a second chance on television. It's now scheduled for Sunday evening on ABC. Several years ago ABC canceled the fine music program because its low ratings were hurting the audience for all of the same evening's programs, even though the sponsors and millions of loyal listeners liked it. Neither NBC or CBS would give it a home then, and for the same reason. But finally it's been invited back by the network that once rejected it. . . . Vince Edwards, TV's Ben Casey, in his first year of stardom has earned over \$100,000, based on a salary of \$1,750 per week plus overtime, according to weekly Variety. Now he's trying to renegotiate his contract to raise his weekly stipend to \$7,500 plus some plush fringe benefits. . . . Bing Crosby will be back for his second special of the season of ABC on May 14, with Bob Hope as guest star. . . . The fall schedule for NBC has been finalized. Seventeen of this year's programs will be back along with 11 new ones. Over 65 per cent of the evening schedule will be in color.

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